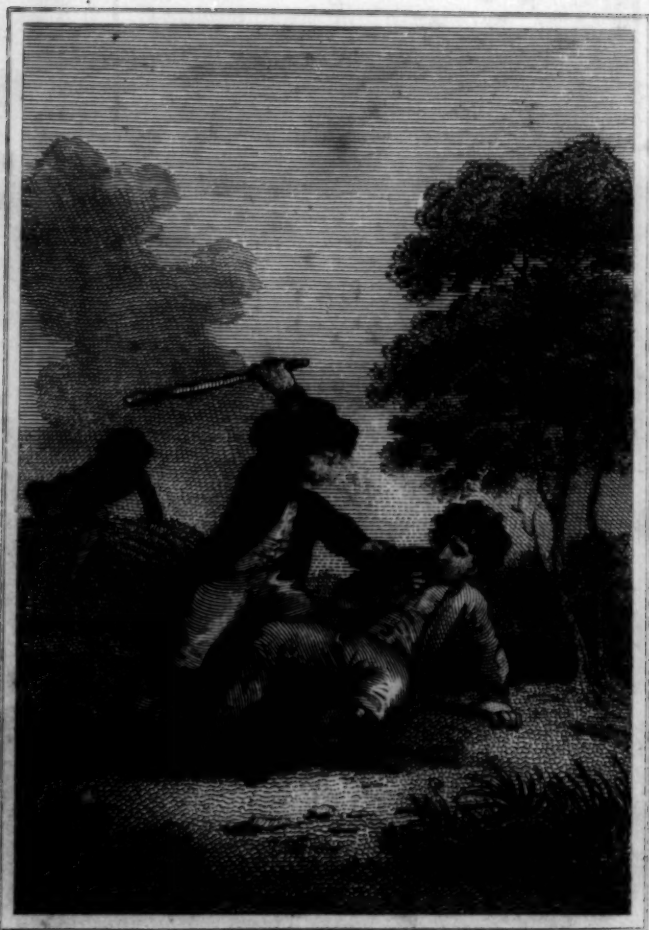




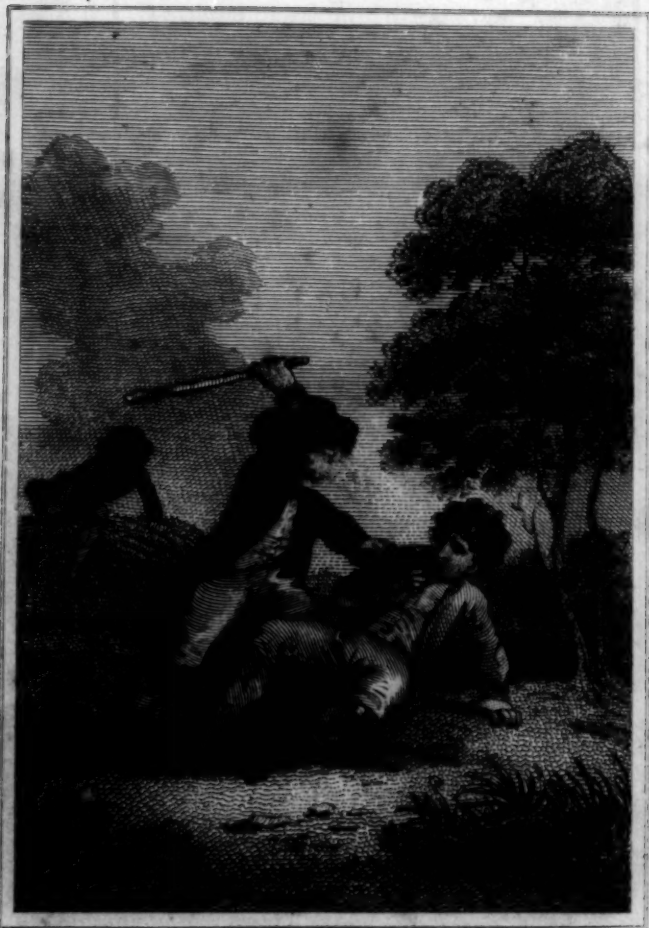
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G. Murray sculp.

THE FRIENDS.

vide page 37.

Published July 28. 1798. by B. Crosby Stationers Court Ludgate Street.



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THE
FRIENDS;
OR, THE
CONTRAST
BETWEEN
VIRTUE AND VICE.



THE
FRIENDS;
OR, THE
CONTRAST
BETWEEN
VIRTUE AND VICE.
A Tale.

DESIGNED FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF YOUTH.

By ELIZABETH GRIFFIN, ^k
AUTHOR OF THE SELECTOR, AND MORAL AMUSEMENTS,
&c. &c.

London:
PRINTED FOR CROSBY AND LETTERMAN,
NO. 4. STATIONERS COURT, NEAR
FATER NOSTER ROW.

1799.



PREFACE.

THE number of books which are constantly published for youth leaves few subjects but which have been frequently and judiciously treated. The delineation of Virtue and Vice, I well know, is not new; but can it be too often, or too strongly pourtrayed to the youthful reader? In the following sheets I have endeavoured to represent

the first in its *real* colours, the latter in its *true* deformity: I am likewise well aware that the early taste is rather for amusing stories than moral disquisition, and have, therefore, made it my study to blend amusement with instruction, avoiding long dissertations, which would, most probably, have been passed over without being read; a practice which, however faulty, is, I believe, too commonly pursued by many young readers.

Thus, with a wish to please and instruct, I send my little work into the world, conscious, that whatever
may

may be its demerits, my incentive will meet with candour, as an attempt to inculcate virtue, and render vice odious, ever must, from those minds whose approbation I am alone desirous to obtain, and who, I trust, will generously forget the errors when they consider the motive.

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THE FRIENDS.

CHAP. I.

HENRY Herman was the son of a gentleman of considerable fortune in the county of Somerset; an exemplary child, and beloved by all the parish in which he lived, for the sweetness of his disposition: his extreme condescension to his inferiors was the theme of every tongue; not that his condescension was in the least tinged with meanness, as he contrived to preserve

his own consequence in the midst of humility, which is by no means a hard task, were those children whom the providence of the Almighty has designed to a superior situation in life to give their reason full scope, and improve by the opportunities they have of acquiring knowledge. Henry did improve, and made good use of the education bestowed upon him. His parents were continually congratulated on having so promising a son ; every father and mother in the vicinity of his residence was anxious their children should resemble him, and pointed him out as a fit object for imitation.

In the same village lived a gentleman, who had a son named Robert, as remarkable

remarkable for the badness of his disposition, and the wickedness of his heart, as Henry was for his good qualities. The nearness of their neighbourhood brought the two families often together; and as the father of Robert was often praising Henry, and intreating his son to improve from so good an example, he instilled into his breast a jealousy, and hatred to his young companion, which, though smothered for the present, only wanted opportunity to blaze into a flame. Bad disposed children, though they want resolution to correct their own faults, which would bring them on a level with those characters held up for their imitation, ever fear, and have a jealousy of superior talents. It would

be no derogation, were they to copy from a good example: on the contrary, it would be praise-worthy, and shew at least a docile disposition. We have many instances where the company and conversation of virtuous youths have overcome very unpromising propensities: but Robert was, too self-willed and obstinate to follow any thing but his own headstrong opinions, which terminated in the end with him (as with most of a similar turn of temper) in bitter repentance.

Henry, with his father and mother, was visiting one day at Mr. Sylwne's, Robert's father's, where they were met by a Mr. and Mrs. Melmouth, who brought with them their daughter Sophia,

phia, a fine, and, what was still better, a very good girl, about eight years old, junior to the young gentlemen two years. After the desert was removed, permission was allowed the young people to divert themselves in a room set apart for the purpose of Robert, and where he deposited the playthings he was constantly purchasing; for as he was the only child, and the glaring faults in his disposition almost totally overlooked by parental fondness, he was suffered to lavish money profusely by his father, who, notwithstanding he was certainly wrong to permit his son to dissipate sums that might have been so disposed of as to gladden the face of wretchedness, was still a very worthy man.

Miss

Miss Melmouth, on entering the play room, was delighted by the sight of a large number of singing birds that hung round the apartment, and ravished the ear with their melody. Having a great fondness for the feathered tribe, her little heart exulted with pleasure, and she examined every cage with the greatest minuteness. Henry was likewise inspecting the little warblers; when having selected a goldfinch, he brought him in the cage to the young lady, and said, "Only observe, Miss Melmouth, the beautiful plumage of this lovely bird?" "Indeed," replied she, after examining it with great attention, "it is very handsome.—Oh! you little charmer," continued she, as the bird undauntedly warbled

warbled forth his unconnected notes,
“ I wish you belonged to me ; how I
should value you, was your mine.”
“ I dare say, Miss,” replied Henry,
“ Master Sylwne will be happy in an
opportunity of obliging you, by re-
signing him to your care ; shall you
not, Robert ? ” “ Pray answer for
yourself,” said the churlish boy ; “ I
shall be happy in no such thing—
though I will give Miss Melmouth one
that I am sure is much handsomer.
You are no judge of birds, I am.” He
then brought a linnet to Sophia, and
told her she should have that, which
was a thousand times more lovely than
the goldfinch. In vain did the gentle
girl intreat, that if he meant to fa-
vour her, by making her a present
of

of a bird, it might be the one whose cage she then held : he was inexorable, and rudely snatched the cage from her hand, which was cut by the wire as he tore it from her. He then left the room, without making the least apology for the hurt he had occasioned ; and while Henry was soothing the affrighted child, returned, with a large cat under his arm, and opening the cage in which the goldfinch was confined, retired to a distance, that the cat might have free egress to her delicious prey, shouting, as the poor bird fluttered to keep clear of its destroyer, with the most brutal joy.

All was now confusion : Miss Melmouth, with the tears running down her

her cheeks, intreated for the life of the unoffending bird; but the ungracious boy denied, exclaiming, "You refused the linnet I proffered you, Miss, and I will be hanged if you shall have the goldfinch Harry Herman chose for you! Why should the one he selected be preferred? Surely I know a handsome bird as well as he does, and I believe a great deal better.—I hate the milkfop!" By this time the cat had secured the little trembler; when Henry Herman, who had stood almost petrified at the scene before him, darted forward, and with great difficulty, after receiving several scratches from the enraged animal, rescued the devoted victim, nearly robbed of all its feathers. Robert, swelling with rage, advanced,

vanced, and insisted the bird should be returned to him; but Henry would by no means consent: "I should be very sorry," said he, "Master Sylwne, to give the poor bird up to a second torture; I do not believe it will survive the fright and injury it has already sustained: the inhumanity of your behaviour exceeds any thing I ever saw; and I am concerned that my feelings urge me to tell you, though under your own father's roof, that you are only a companion for savages. Come, Miss Melmoth, let us leave him and his cat: the illiberality of his behaviour to me I care not a straw for; but his treatment of you has been shameful." He now prepared to open the door; but Robert, enraged

enraged almost to madness, rushed between them and it, and in a menacing attitude insisted they should promise not to divulge a syllable of what had passed in the dining parlour. Sophia, already sufficiently terrified, would gladly have given him her promise, so that she could accomplish her escape; but Henry would not be prevailed on to consent: "You may imagine, Master Sylwne, to intimidate me by your menacing," said he; "but you are much deceived: 'tis impossible I can fear a boy who wages war only with the helpless. Leave the door, sir, for I am determined to depart without any restrictions." Finding Robert bent on opposing his departure, he turned to Miss Melmouth, and begged she would
not

not alarm herself, but retire to the other side of the room, and he would soon set her free: he then resolutely seized Robert by the collar, and, by a powerful exertion, threw him almost the length of the room.

Before he could convey Miss Melmouth from the place, the cries of Robert, who lay roaring, with the blood running from his nose, which in the struggle had received a blow, alarmed the company, who now arrived at the scene of contest. Sophia flew to her mother; and the only answer she could make to her—"Bless me, what is the matter," was tears. Mr. Sylwne, turning to Henry, begged to be informed what could have happened to occasion.

from this terrific appearance. Henry gave him a circumstantial relation of the whole affair. When he had finished, and Mr. Sylwne had thanked him, he turned to his son, and thus addressed him:—"I am both surprized and shocked that a son of mine should so far forget the rights of hospitality, and the common forms of good breeding, independent of the brutality annexed to the conduct you have pursued, as to treat those who honour me with their company in this shameful manner.—What apology can you make, adequate to the offence you have committed? None. Master Herman has given you a better lesson, by the different manner in which he acted, than any words of mine could do.

Rise,

Rise, fir, and instantly ask pardon of all present for the notoriety of your behaviour."

Robert, who lay swelling with resentment, could on no consideration be prevailed on to comply with his father's request; in fact, he remained so sulky, it was impossible to get a word out of him; they therefore left him to himself, and retired to the drawing room. The poor goldfinch, who had been the innocent cause of all, remained still in the hand of Henry Herman; and as soon as Sophia Melmouth had recovered herself, she intreated permission to carry the little panting flutterer home with her, that she might, by attention, endeavour to restore

restore it. The request was complied with by Mr. Sylwne, with a compliment on her humanity ; and a cage being procured, the bird was delivered to Sophia, who, as her parents were not yet ready to return, sent him home by a servant, with a particular charge.

CHAP. II.

ROBERT was prevailed upon by his father, before the company departed, to beg pardon for his ill behaviour; but though he outwardly appeared sorry for the part he had acted, he was, in reality, so far from it, that he vowed, in his own diabolical mind, to take an opportunity, some future time, of making Henry Herman feel his resentment.—What a dreadful disposition! How much was he his own enemy by this conduct: peace of mind must ever

ever remain a stranger to such characters, and the detestation of all good people follow them through life. Believe me, my young readers, you cannot too much guard yourselves against the inroads of a similar disposition. Let Henry Herman be your favorite; and from his even temper, obliging manner, humanity and benevolence of character, learn a lesson that may be of use to you all your lives.

The poor goldfinch, notwithstanding all Miss Melmouth's care and nursing, did not survive the worrying it had met with more than two days. This gentle, good girl, felt a great deal at losing him, as she had a very compassionate heart: besides, the means by

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which

which the poor thing lost its life was deeply impressed on her memory, and she was heard to say, "She feared she could never endure Robert Sylwne more, unless she could forget the fate of the poor goldfinch." When Henry Herman learnt the bird was dead, he was much hurt, and reading over some poetic pieces, he found the following, and as the lines appeared applicable, he transcribed, and sent them to Miss Melmouth.

Verses on the death of a favorite Goldfinch.

I.

What! is my pretty Songster dead?

Alas! his gentle spirit's fled,

And cold and stiff he lies.

His painted wings no more will fly,

His little feet inactive lie,

And death has sealed his eyes.

II.

II.

How oft with his mellifluous lay
He welcom'd in the rosy day,
And 'till the ev'ning sung;
But now his harmony is o'er,
His tuneful pipe will chaunt no more,
For death has stopp'd his tongue.

III.

Sweet Bird! like thine's my mortal state;
I too, like thee, must bend to fate,
And bow to tyrant death;
O may I, when that period comes,
Meet with serenity my doom,
And gladly yield my breath!

Those lines pleased Sophia; and her
parents acknowledged, in the wide cir-
cle of their acquaintance, they knew
not so promising a boy.

Four years after this, the mother of
Mrs. Herman died, and left to her

grandson (of whom she had always been very fond) an independence of five hundred pounds per annum, expressly mentioning in her will, "That it should be subject to no controul, sensible that no ill use would be made of her bequest." Henry was very grateful to the memory of Mrs. Dawson, for those proofs of her affection, but intreated his father to receive and appropriate the legacy to such uses as might appear to him most proper; modestly observing, it certainly was much too large a sum to be entrusted to the expenditure of a boy. Although Mr. Herman was greatly pleased with his son for his behaviour on the occasion, he could by no means be prevailed on to take the

the charge of the income on himself; and on Henry's importuning him one day, thus addressed him: "Your worthy grandmother, in leaving you so very young independent, my dear boy, proceeded from the conviction she entertained, that your present disposition left every reason to hope your future conduct would prove a credit to those connected with you, either by blood or friendship; I am so far of her opinion, as to leave without apprehension the sum assigned you to your free disposal; and while I observe the uses to which you apply it, shall be able, in some measure, to judge how the more ample fortune which will devolve to you, on my demise, will be appropriated; I shall therefore give

you no advice ; follow the dictates of your own mind ; and I hope this circumstance will only leave me more thankful for the blessing of your existence." Henry was much affected by this goodness, and secretly resolved his father should have no reason to blame his indulgence ; for that he would endeavour to act so as to give satisfaction to so worthy and affectionate a parent.

CHAP. III.

ROBERT Sylwne had an aunt who was extremely fond of him, and as his disposition was the exact counterpart of her own, 'tis no wonder she was blind to those faults so conspicuous to every one beside. This lady fell ill of a fever about the time Mrs. Dawson died, which terminated in her dissolution. She left to her favorite five thousand pounds, under no restriction; for she had often been heard to say, during her illness, "That she thought

her Robert ought to have free scope to his spirit as well as Henry Herman, and she would take care he should be independent as well as him." When his aunt's kindness was communicated to Robert, he was like any one intoxicated with joy, at the idea of having so much money to do with as he pleased, without one sensation of sorrow for the loss of so affectionate a relative; every thing he said and did had his own gratification in view. Mr. Sylwne, however partial as a father, could not be blind to many traits in his son's temper; and as he thought it would be little short of madness, and attended with the worst consequences, to suffer him to have the command of so large a sum, he endeavoured to prevail

vail on him to choose himself, or some other friend, as director for him; but Robert was too fond of the power invested in him to pay attention to any such advice, and replied to his father, "That as his aunt had left the money to him, he would keep it, and he would warrant he could find ways enough to dispose of it, as well as any body else." Observe the contrast in the character of those two boys, my dear young readers. Who among you would not wish to act like Henry Herman? Who among you do not hold Robert Sylwne in detestation? The really good are always diffident; while the designing and selfish are opinionated, bold, and assuming.

Mrs. Dawson, when she observed that no ill use would be made of the independence she left to her young grandson, had previously, no doubt, studied the turn of his temper and disposition; and the manner in which he disposed of her bequest, could it have been possible for her to have known it, must have afforded her the most sincere pleasure. Many a one, whose heart was oppressed with accumulated misery, has his bounty cheered: the depressed widow, the deserted fatherless, ever found in him a friend and benefactor; while the more openly acknowledged poor followed his steps with reiterated blessings; and the heart of his worthy father would often swell with gratitude to the all-wise disposer
for

for the comfort he enjoyed in so promising a child.

The difference between him and Robert Sylwne was astonishing: instead of imparting comfort to his fellow creatures, he was dissipating the fortune left him by his partial aunt in all manner of reprehensible follies; purchasing horses without judgment; for what judgment could fifteen years of age be supposed to possess in such matters: buying cocks, and forming matches for fighting, was his principal diversion. Cruelty appeared inherent in his nature; for surely nothing can discover a greater disposition to cruelty, than taking delight in setting two birds together, and suffering them to goad each other, till the

death of one or both finishes the contest. It might justly be observed, that Mr. Sylwne had it always in his power to restrain his son at so early an age from committing such enormities; but let it be remembered, he has been always mentioned as a partial parent: besides, the great command of money Robert enjoyed enabled him to hide many of his faulty transactions from his father, either by bribing those of the servants that were in his confidence to silence, or procuring, by the same means, some of his low associates to take the matter on themselves. By those means he hid from his unsuspicious father the most vicious part of his conduct, adding the meanness of deception to his already infamous character.

Henry

Henry was returning one morning from Mr. Melmouth's, where he had been on a message from his father, and was ruminating on the many good qualities of Sophia, with whom he had spent two hours in rational and pleasing entertainment, when his attention was arrested by the loud cries of some one who appeared as if they were suffering from a severe beating: seeing no person near of whom he could inquire, he hastily cleared a hedge, the only obstacle to the satisfaction of his curiosity; but what was his astonishment, when he saw lying on the ground a boy, who, from the rags that covered him, seemed a pauper, and Robert Sylwne standing over him, a large cudgel stick in his hand, with which he
was

was beating him severely, whilst the blood ran from a wound that appeared to have been recently received in the boy's leg—for a moment he stood like one petrified; but the cries of the poor wretch on the ground soon quickened his recollection. He hastily seized the arm of Robert, uplifted for the purpose of pursuing his discipline, and thus addressed him: "Surely, Master Sylwne, humanity must be totally banished from your breast, or it would be impossible you could treat a fellow creature as you are treating this poor boy, whatever his offence against you may have been." Robert, enraged still more than before, at this interruption, struggled violently to disengage his arm from the gripe of Henry, but without

without effect: "Let go my arm, Herman!" exclaimed he; "I will break every bone in his skin: the insolent young rascal shall pay dearly for daring to lash my favorite Dido!" By this time the poor boy had endeavoured to remove himself; but the pain from the wound, and the bruises he had received from the cudgel stick, did not permit him to reach many paces before he sunk on the earth unable to proceed.

In vain did Henry beg to be informed of the origin of this *fracas*: Robert only answered by vowing revenge against the boy, when not protected, he sneeringly said, by his champion. He then, by a powerful exertion, extricated

cated himself from the hold Henry had of his arm, and running across the field, leaped the gate, and was out of sight in an instant. Henry immediately repaired to the object of Robert's vengeance, and desired he would explain the meaning of what he had been witness to.—“Indeed, sir,” said the poor boy, “I did not deserve to be so ill used; but might overcomes right—I must be obliged to bear it, as I am without a friend in the wide world.” He would have said more, but his feelings overcame him, and he sobbed audibly. Henry's compassionate heart was instantly awakened; he asked the boy if he thought he could reach across two fields, as then something should be done for his relief, if he found
he

he was not undeserving. The boy thanked him in the best manner he was able, and said he would try, but that his leg was so very painful and stiff he knew not how to set it to the ground. The cudgel stick, the instrument of passion, had fallen in the hasty exit of Robert Sylwne, and had been forgot by him; it now served for the support of the boy, who began slowly to move over the field, Henry walking by his side, lest Robert should return, and renew his ill treatment. Close to the park gate of Mr. Herman stood a neat cottage, inhabited by a man whose wife had been foster mother to Henry, and who was one of the first that felt the good effects of Mrs. Dawson's bequest, Henry (with
his

his father's concurrence) having caused the cottage to be erected, and presented it to his nurse, with an annuity of fifty pounds a year, here she lived, and was often visited by her youthful benefactor, whom she almost idolized.

To the house of this worthy woman Henry conducted his new charge, and having consigned him to her care for the present, hastened home, to give an account of the embassy on which he was sent, and to allay any doubts they might have entertained concerning his safety, as he had greatly exceeded the time in which he promised to be back.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

WHEN Henry reached home, he found dinner had been retarded, and a messenger dispatched to Mr. Melmouth's to inquire the reason of his delay ; but as he made his appearance before the servant's return, his parents were no way alarmed, only surprised at his unusual want of punctuality. After Henry had entreated their pardon for breaking in on the regularity of the family arrangements, he told them, that he hoped, on the removal of the cloth,

to

to be able fully to account for his absence at the promised time; and from the confidence Mr. and Mrs. Herman reposed in their son's word and actions, no doubt remained but he could do so.

The things removed, wine set on the table, and the servants withdrawn, Henry gave a faithful relation of his morning adventure, and received the praises his parents could not withhold from him, with the greatest modesty answering, " That he was happy his conduct in the affair had merited their approbation, but that he only acted from a natural impulse of nature, which seemed to revolt from every species of oppression; he knew not whether the
boy

boy was deserving or not, though, if he was to judge from physiognomy, he should pronounce in his favour; but, with their leave, he would go again to the nurse's, and endeavour to learn who he was, and where he came from, adding he was anxious to know if any thing had been done to his leg."

Having obtained permission, he hastened to the cottage. When he arrived he found the nurse had been very active in his absence, having applied a bandage of herbs to the wound, and washed the bruises he had received with something of her own preparing; she had likewise put him into a comfortable bed.

On Henry's appearance by the bedside,

side, the boy began to express his gratitude to him, in the strongest terms, for his goodness to a poor distressed stranger, and would have continued in the same strain much longer, had he not been interrupted by Henry telling him, "He had done no more than his duty in the relief he had afforded him; but that as he still remained ignorant who he was, or of the nature of the offence he had committed against Master Sylwne, he should be glad to be informed both of the one and the other; and he might rest satisfied, if he adhered strictly to the truth, any further assistance he might need at his hands should not be withheld." The boy having raised himself answered him as follows:

"You

“You shall be informed very readily, my worthy young gentleman, of all I know concerning myself, but that is very little.—My name is Charles Curtis. The first thing that made an impression on my memory was the death of my father (who had never been well that I remember) and my mother’s indifferent health: we lived in a cottage on the edge of a common, a great distance from any other house, and an old woman, who appeared very fond of me, did the labour, and used to go out and bring in with her such things as we wanted, though where she got them from I never knew; except when I walked out with my mother, I was kept to my book, and in receiving lessons of instruction from
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that dear parent now no more." Here his little heart swelled, and he burst into a torrent of tears. Henry was far from being unmoved at the filial sorrow of the poor boy; but as he knew not how to administer consolation, remained silent till Charles had sufficiently recovered himself to proceed—"My mother continued to grow weaker and weaker, and the old woman, whom we called Peggy, would frequently entreat her to go to some place where she might have advice; my mother would suffer her to go on as long as she pleased, without interruption, and when she had ended, would clasp her hands together in a kind of agony, drop on her knees, and by the moving of her lips, seemed asking advice from heaven:

ven: Peggy would then draw me away, and when I again returned, I should find her calm as usual.

“ At length we removed to a small town, about ten miles from this village, Peggy having provided us a lodging, and seen to the removal of our scanty furniture; there my mother was visited by doctors, but did not appear to receive any benefit. Being now older, I was capable of observation, and have frequently observed the old woman go out with a bundle; at such times she would never suffer me to go with her, giving as a reason, it was improper to leave my mother alone: on her return, I have watched whether she brought back what she

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carried out, but always saw her empty handed, only that she would give my mother some money, which was sure to draw tears from her eyes.

“ One day I asked my mother to let me have another coat, as the one I wore was mended as much as it would bear, and added, I was sure Peggy had used all the pieces ; never shall I forget her feelings ; at first she could not speak, but at length said—“ Wound me not, my Charles, by such a request ; what can I do ? Oh ! my brother, could you but know my present misery, and the unprotected state of this poor child, even you, I am convinced, would think I had suffered enough, and I should be restored to your affec-
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tions—Where, oh! where shall I find you.—She could articulate no more, but sunk on the floor in a fit, and when brought a little to herself her senses appeared deranged; nor did she ever recover either them or her speech while she lived, which was only till the next day.

“My frantic sorrow at her loss was so great, that the good old Peggy got me removed to a neighbour's, while she prepared every thing for my mother's funeral; nor did she trust herself with the sight of me till she had accomplished her duty: but she no longer appeared the active old woman; the shock had been too much for her. She told me every thing my mother

left had been disposed of to bury her, and a few shillings was all that remained; "But that," said she, "is not my greatest grief—it is increased by finding my strength so much impaired as to prevent my working for your support, my dear boy; however, this good woman will let you remain here another night, and to-morrow I will see what can be done." She then left me, never to return; for the fatigue she had endured threw her into a fever: the parish officers were applied to, but would not receive her, and, notwithstanding her dangerous state, passed her to her own parish at a considerable distance. Before she set out, she sent for me, and told me, to put my trust in Providence, never to do a bad action,

action, but endeavour to seek such employ as my early years would admit of, adding, she wished it was in her power to give me such an insight into the family I belonged to as might be of service to me; but that, though she had served my mother long and faithfully, she was always reserved to her; yet from the many valuables she had had the disposal of, she was convinced her situation had formerly been affluent. She had once, she said, an opportunity of hearing a few words that passed between my father and mother, and by them learnt that her maiden name was Bruce; and she believed I had an uncle, who it appeared my mother had disobliged.

“ She now took from her pocket half-a-crown and a mourning ring, which she had found among my mother's things and preserved for me, telling me to be frugal of the former, and try if I could get to go on errands for some tradesman, and to be as careful of the latter as of my life ; to let nothing induce me to part with it, as it might be the means, one time or other, of restoring me to those who had the best right to take care of me.

“ Being nearly exhausted with the exertion she had made, I was not permitted to stay with her any longer, but returned to the house I had remained in since the death of my mother ; but when the woman to whose
care

care Peggy had intrusted me found how things were, she told me I could stay no longer there, for that my breakfast was not paid for, and she had a family of her own. I entreated, and at length gained her consent to stay there that night, on condition that I should provide for myself, which I did. I walked out, and offered myself to every tradesman in the town; but, being unknown, none of them would employ me—and on the next morning I formed the resolution of going to the next large town, where I might meet, perhaps, with better luck. I set out and walked till I came within three miles of this place, when I found myself so weary, I asked and obtained shelter for the night in a hut inhabited by an

old woman, who put me so in mind of Peggy, that I cried myself to sleep; and after I had risen this morning, and been refreshed with a bowl of milk and slice of bread, for which this good woman would not take any thing, I set forward, and had reached that field, sir, in which you first saw me, when a pointer dog ran after me, biting at my heels; I turned to drive him back, when he seized my leg, and bit it as you see: as I had a small stick in my hand, I struck him once or twice; he then went yelping off, when I was almost instantly overtaken by that young gentleman you rescued me from, and who, I believe, would have killed me, had you not released me from his power." Charles here finished his recital;

recital ; and Henry, who had become more and more interested in his favour, as he proceeded, entreated him to make himself easy, and endeavour to recover from his present confinement as speedily as possible, for he would, with the concurrence of his father, whose advice he never acted without, take charge of his future fortunes, while he continued to deserve it, adding, he need not fear his late antagonist, when under the protection of Mr. Herman ; and having once more recommended him to the care of his good nurse, from whom he received an assurance of every attention, he returned home, anxious to inform his parents what he had just learnt from poor Charles.

CHAP. V.

HENRY's heart felt light, in the idea that he had not rescued an undeserving object, and various plans for his advantage pursued each other quickly though his benevolent imagination : his arrival at home put an end to his cogitations. " Well, son," said Mr. Herman, on his entrance, " I see by your countenance you do not think you have assisted an unworthy character, consequently do not regret your interference in his favour."—" No indeed, my dear sir," replied

replied Henry ; “ nor do I think you will regret it, when I tell you in what a friendless, deplorable condition, the poor boy is left.” He then related, nearly verbatim, what the reader has already been informed ; and Mr. Herman, whose heart was always open to the wretched, agreed to his son’s taking him into his future protection.

Henry was very eager for the recovery of Charles, that he might place him under the tuition of Mr. Parsons, a worthy man, who lived near his father’s house ; and after a fortnight’s confinement and good nursing he was able to walk about without difficulty.

By the orders of Mrs. Herman linen had been made, and Henry had taken care the tailor should not be idle ; so that Charles Curtis now appeared a very different boy. No time was lost in placing him with the schoolmaster before mentioned ; and Henry agreed to pay so much a week to nurse for his board and lodging. The poor fellow was very grateful for those marks of kindness bestowed upon him, and would frequently pour out the fullness of his little heart in expressions of thankfulness.—“ Do not thank me, Charles,” Henry would answer, “ but revere the all-wise disposer of events, that ordained me to become the humble instrument to dispense his good will towards you : the orphan is ever
his

his peculiar care, as has been particularly shewn in your preservation; and in whatever station you may hereafter be, I hope you will never forget to pay him those praises so justly due to his watchful providence."—"The precepts my dear mother taught me, Master Herman," Charles replied, "will ever make me regard the Almighty first, but you are next, and shall ever be my example; and then I shall be a favorite with all good people; for every body loves you." Many similar conversations would often pass between those good boys; for though Charles Curtis was so much younger, and never had the opportunities, nor possessed the means of dispensing good, like Henry Herman, the seeds of worth and benevolence

nevolence appeared ingrafted in his disposition.

Robert Sylwne was no stranger to the late events; but notwithstanding the rancour and malice that prevailed against Charles for beating his dog, and Henry for preventing him from wreaking his vengeance on him, he knew it would be bad policy to let it appear, and waited till some future opportunity should occur, when he might make them regret having offended him.

Charles improved amazingly, learnt every thing he was taught rapidly, and the character he bore in the school was such as to convey the strongest sensations

tions of pleasure to his young benefactor. The mourning ring, mentioned as the property of Charles, had been intrusted to the care of Henry, from the time of his taking up his abode at nurse Norris's, and as there was a probability that it might one day tend to elucidate the family from whence Charles Curtis derived his origin, was carefully preserved.

Every succeeding month rendered Charles Curtis dearer to Henry Herman; and after he had remained a twelvemonth boarded with nurse, he was by his desire received into the family of Mr. Herman, with whom he was likewise a great favorite.

Charles

Charles now became the constant companion of Henry, who took the greatest pains in his improvement; for as it was designed to place him in some line of business, as soon as he should have attained a proper age, the education he received was a common one, Mr. Herman judging that the most proper; but the affection his youthful protector entertained for him made him anxious that he should obtain some of the more polite accomplishments. Though Mr. Herman seldom disagreed with his son on any subject, in this they thought differently; and as Henry could not bring his father to consent, that masters for teaching the polite arts should attend Charles, he endeavoured to teach him himself,

himself, and as he was a great proficient, his scholar improved very fast: he likewise engaged him in a course of historical reading; and by explanations and illustrations, that his own understanding, aided by an excellent education, had imbibed, he bid fair to be a well-bred informed youth.

With what pleasure did Henry view the boy he eighteen months before had rescued from wretchedness and oppression; how did his worthy heart exult in reflecting on the memory of his kind grandmother, that had put it in his power to relieve distress, and in the excellent disposition of his affectionate parents, in permitting him to follow
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the dictates of that heart : peace ever attended him ; his days passed serenely, as at the close of every evening the retrospect would bear reflection ; his night's sleep was sweet and refreshing, for he had neither injured nor oppressed any one ; nor had envy, that baneful vice, ever found admission in his pure breast ! Could Robert Sylwne say as much ? No, my youthful readers, believe me he could not ; exactly the reverse must have been his sensations, for exactly the reverse was his conduct. The contrast is so striking I have no need to point it out. And should any of you feel an inclination stealing on you, in the smallest degree similar to Robert Sylwne's, I trust you will repel it with all your power,

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as 'tis dangerous to suffer the least inroad to take place in a virtuous pursuit; and, believe me, no other pursuit will benefit you.

CHAP. VI.

HENRY having accepted an invitation to spend a week with a friend, and a fair being held in a country town, two miles from Herman Manor, during his absence, Charles asked and obtained permission to accompany a young gentleman (son to one of Mr. Herman's friends) in a walk, to view the rural sports that were established there on every annual return. They had been through the fair, and were returning to visit the dancers in the barn,

barn, when they were met by Robert Sylwne and a party of his companions, a low and vicious set of youths; for it was his delight to be at the head of his company, as from that circumstance he seldom met contradiction in any of his schemes of amusement, however brutal, and was constantly provided with abettors in any plot he found inclination to form.

When they came near Charles and his friend, Robert broke from the midst of them, and running against Charles Curtis knocked him backward, as he was not prepared for the shock; and beside, Robert Sylwne was, from his size, (which, for his age, was athletic) no match for him. Frank
Watson,

Watson, his companion, was of a very gentle disposition, which Robert was no stranger to; he therefore thought he might insult Charles with impunity, and walked on, shouting and laughing immoderately. Frank assisted Charles to rise, who was for the moment stunned by the severity of the blow on the back part of his head; but as soon as he recovered his recollection, his spirit, of which he had a sufficient share, would have stimulated him to follow the aggressor, had he not been persuaded to the contrary by his young friend, who pointed out to him very truly the little amends he was likely to meet with from Robert, aided by so brutish a set, and advised their returning instantly home; but Charles said,

said, he saw no reason their pleasure should be abridged, as he found no inconvenience from the fall, and Robert Sylwne was not likely to come in their way again, he having taken the road to the town, therefore they would pursue their intention, and go to the barn.

Thither they went, and found themselves much amused by the innocent jocularities of the honest rustics, and the awkward movements of many of them, as they pursued the mazy dance. Charles was just going to propose to Frank their returning home, when Robert Sylwne and his party entered; he then felt something rise within him repugnant to any such idea, and remained stationary.

Robert

Robert fixed himself near the spot occupied by Charles and his friend, and began in a strain of irony, obliquely meant to Charles, to ask one of his companions, "How he relished his fall, and whether the back part of his head did not ache confoundedly?" Finding no notice taken of this, he changed his plan, and asked another, "Whether he could inform him if young Herman was expected; and if the front places were to be taken, as he observed the parish boy who lived at his father's standing foremost in the throng?" The one addressed answered with seeming ignorance, "He did not know who he meant by the parish boy, as really he saw no one there answering that description; he surely could not mean either of the young gentlemen before

before them, their appearance bearing every sign of opulence."—"That is the chap I mean," returned Robert, resting a small cane he held in his hand on the shoulder of Charles; "the pauper boy, just started up into a wou'd be gentleman, by the aid of that primitive milk and water soul Henry Herman: listen to me, and I will tell you all about it." He then, in a most ludicrous manner, began informing his companions, together with what bystanders his vociferous loud talking had collected round him, and who were a set of ignorant countrymen, when and where he had met with Charles, describing the meanness of his dress with every aggravation his malicious disposition could furnish him

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with; and then proceeded to load Henry Herman with the most opprobrious appellations, observing, that his grandmother's bequest, and his father's fondness, occasioned him to suppose he had a right to raise a regiment of gentlemen and gentlewomen, for that all the poor in the village were grown so saucy, from his encouragement, that there was no bearing them.

Charles, who had remained extremely uneasy while himself was the subject of discourse, and would certainly have answered him then, had he not been prevented by Frank Watson's holding him tight by the arm, and whispering him not to regard it, now darted forward, and facing Robert Sylwne,

Sylwne, thus addressed him :—" I have disregarded whatever you thought proper to say concerning me, Master Sylwne, though I am not conscious of having given you any offence to justify the insults I have this day received, but I cannot bear to hear my dear benefactor and all his family reviled, for their uniform goodness to their fellow creatures : 'tis well you are not heard by those more able to speak in their defence than I am, or you would probably depart this place more crest fallen than the poor parish boy, as you have been pleased to represent me." Robert, enraged at the freedom with which he was answered, seized Charles by the collar, and would have handled him very roughly, but was prevented

by Frank Watſon, who, roused to exertion by the idea of the consequences that might attend any further altercation, seized Robert Sylwne by the arm, and told him, "He should have imagined good manners would have restrained him from insulting Charles Curtis while he was with him; and as I never," he continued, "lose sight of the respect due to you, in the person of *your* companions, be they who they may, I certainly have a right to expect the same indulgence; I therefore request we may be permitted to depart this place without further molestation; you well know I detest all riot."

Robert had quitted his hold of Charles, and listened without interruption

ruption till Frank had ended; he then replied: "Far be it from me to wish to give you offence, Watson; I shall for this time take no more notice of the matter, though I cannot help saying, I did not suppose you would have chose a boy kept on charity for your companion; however, he may thank you for whole bones at present—I shall find some other opportunity to pay off old scores."

As Frank and Charles had walked away while Robert was speaking, the last words were not heard by Frank; but Charles caught every syllable. His spirits had been greatly agitated during the above transactions; it had been a painful effort to overcome the indig-

nation that arose in his breast at the injurious treatment he had received from Robert Sylwne; and though he was ever ready to acknowledge the great obligations he lay under to his youthful benefactor, his feelings had been greatly wounded, by being made the sport of a set of uninformed rustics, who, wherever they saw him in future, might think themselves authorised, in the example set them by a superior, to turn him into ridicule. In such reflections as these Charles indulged himself during their walk home; nor was he often interrupted by Frank, for his spirits, never very high, were almost equally depressed with Charles's, from the same occurrence.

Before

Before they parted, however, Charles made him promise to keep the matter secret, as he well knew it would give Mr. Herman uneasiness, which sooner than do, he could be content, he thought, to suffer torture. Gratitude, my dear readers, is a noble attribute, and ought to be cherished with the greatest care : in the breast of Charles Curtis it glowed with the purest warmth, for the soil was congenial.

Mr. Herman asked Charles, on return, " If he had been amused ?" He answered, " Not much ;" and as he found himself far from well, obtained permission to retire early.

He passed a restless night, and when

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he would have arisen in the morning he found himself unequal to the task, from a dreadful pain in the back part of his head, occasioned, no doubt, by the fall given him by Robert Sylwne.

When Mrs. Herman understood he was ill, she visited him, and sent instantly for the medical attendant of the family, for finding him inclined to fever, and hearing him complain of his head, she concluded he had exercised too much the day before, and overheated himself. Mr. Champion, on his arrival, agreed with her in opinion, and as the fever continued to increase, recommended he should be kept very quiet, which, with the medicines he should

should fend, he hoped would carry off the disorder, without its arriving to any consequence.

Henry was expected home the next day, and Mrs. Herman gave strict orders the apothecary's directions should be minutely followed; for as she well knew the great affection her son had for Charles, she was fearful of the ill effect the intelligence of his illness might have on him, and flattered herself care and due attention in administering the medicine would carry off the threatened disorder by the next day; not that she was indifferent to him on his own account; on the contrary, she was very partial to him: indeed the sweetness of his disposition rendered

him a general favorite throughout the whole house.

On the arrival of Henry at home, he found his friend in a very dangerous state; the fever had risen in the night to a most alarming height, and when Mr. Champion called, he requested a physician might be sent for. To represent the affliction it threw him into would be impossible, I shall therefore leave it to the imagination of those who possess hearts equally sensible.

In the afternoon, after Henry's return, Frank Watson called at Mr. Herman's, and being informed Henry was returned, entered the drawing room, to inquire personally concerning
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ing the health of Charles; on his entrance he found him alone. He in very forcible terms lamented the illness of his favorite, and interrogated Frank as to the exercise they had used the day of the fair, imputing the state he then lay in to their imprudence: Frank, thrown off his guard, and eager to exculpate himself, unthinkingly answered, "The fault was Robert Sylwne's." Astonished by this reply, Henry questioned, and as he had gone too far to recede, obtained every information on the subject in the power of Frank to afford him, though he acknowledged he had given his promise to Charles Curtis not to divulge the manner in which he (Charles) had been treated.

The danger of his friend, added to the hatred Henry Herman had to such a mode of conduct, gave rise to the utmost indignation in his mind, when the whole was fairly disclosed; and reflection convinced him of the necessity some stop should be put to the atrocities so frequently committed by Robert Sylwne against an unoffending lad, whose misfortunes ought to have been his protection.

Henry fought his father, and surprised him as much as he himself had been, when he repeated what he had just learnt.—“With your permission, my dear sir,” said Henry, “I will wait on Robert Sylwne, and endeavour to convince him how derogatory he is acting

acting to the station he holds in life, thus to pursue with his hatred one whose disposition is incapable of giving offence; and if I cannot bring him to reason that way, I will caution him against the consequences to be apprehended, should he persevere till he has forced you to espouse the cause of Charles."

After musing a few moments, Mr. Herman replied—"I have no objection, son, to your going, because I am sure you will not exceed the bounds of propriety in your discourse; and I really think that wicked youth ought to have a curb placed on his vile actions: besides, notwithstanding the respect I have for Mr. Sylwne, and feel
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for him in having so ungracious a child, I am determined to protect Charles Curtis, when aggrieved unjustly, with all my power. Go then, my dear boy; and may success attend your endeavours to settle the difference amicably."

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

HENRY hastened to the house of Mr. Sylwne, and finding, on inquiry, that Robert was at home, and alone, was shewn into the room where he sat: he started at his entrance, but soon recovered himself sufficiently to thank him for the honour he did him by this visit, for, when he pleased, few could exceed him in politeness. "The motive of my visit, Master Sylwne, this morning, was not ceremony," said Henry; "it was justice
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to the injured that brought me here."

"The injured!" replied Robert, evidently confused; "really, sir, I cannot comprehend to what you allude."—"I will explain myself instantly," answered Henry: "Charles Curtis lies at this time in a dangerous situation, which probably may terminate fatally, entirely owing to your wanton, not to say, cruel treatment; it is not my wish to give you any offence, but you must be certain in your own mind, that the manner in which you conducted yourself at the fair was in the highest degree reprehensible."—"I think," interrupted Robert, "you take great liberties; by what right do you lecture me? As to the upstart boy you mention, what have I to do with his illness? he should learn

learn the respect due to his superiors."

"I never heard he was wanting in respect where due," returned Henry; "and am certain, in the instance I allude to, he was entirely without blame: had there been no witness of his conduct, his own feeble testimony, opposed to your's, Master Sylwne, might have been disbelieved by many, not that I should have doubted for a moment; but Frank Watson, who informed me of the whole transaction, is too respectable for even you to attempt contradiction."—"Well, sir," replied Robert, "and suppose I chose to resent at that time an offence I had received before, am I obliged to be answerable to you for my conduct?"—"Certainly not," answered Henry; "but had you
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any regard to your own character, any wish to preserve the peace of your worthy father, you would act very differently: from the situation in which it has pleased Providence to place you, much is expected from you. We have both been highly favoured; and should we not strive to raise the sinking heart, rather than, by oppression, and the resentment of imaginary injuries, shew ourselves unworthy the favours we receive? But as I do not wish to intrude on your time, Master Sylwne, I shall only add, that I am very sorry to observe the little contrition you shew for the part you have acted towards Charles Curtis; and to caution you (should it please Heaven to restore him) against interrupting him in future, it being the
determination

determination of my father to protect him from every species of insult, which he commissioned me, before I left him, to inform you of; and as he knows the affection I entertain for him, I am convinced he is sincere—you will do well, therefore, to reflect seriously on what I have told you, and not bring trouble on your affectionate parent, by following the dictates of an imperious, malevolent, and turbulent disposition."

Henry, without waiting for an answer from Robert, left the house, and on his return home had the pleasure to hear that his friend was considerably better: this intelligence was the most pleasing he had for a long time been told, and he hastened to his chamber to enjoy

enjoy the news by ocular demonstration. Charles was so much better, as to have obtained leave of the doctor for his rising, that his bed might be made more comfortable, and received Henry with extreme satisfaction; no mention was, however, made of any thing that had passed previous to his illness, as his friend judged the subject ought not to be brought forward until his recovery was in a considerable state of forwardness, as he very rightly supposed the sense he entertained of the insult given in so gross a manner had been the principal reason of his confinement.

From that day Charles began to mend, and in the course of the fortnight

night was well enough to be informed of the visit Henry had made to Robert Sylwne, and the determination of Mr. Herman to protect him equally with his own son. Robert having reflected, after the departure of Henry, on the conversation they had had, became thoroughly persuaded in his own mind, that Mr. Herman was determined, in good earnest, to protect Charles Curtis, and that it would be bad policy in him to pursue him openly with any rancour: he well knew his father was as yet a stranger to every thing that had lately happened between them, and he would by no means have wished him to have been informed of any part of his conduct in regard to Charles, for as self
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always prevailed with him over every other consideration, he was fearful, should he seriously offend his father, he would bequeath from him such part of his property as was at his own disposal. Neither duty nor affection had any share in his fear, for he was incapable of either; but his love of riches, which enabled him to gratify his ruling passions, was so great, that he would not have scrupled to give up even his favorite project of injuring Charles Curtis, and mortifying Henry Herman, to that consideration; but as he had promised nothing, he resolved to let the matter rest for the present, and not, at least for a time, again molest one whose virtues and goodness had raised him such powerful protectors.

. Charles

Charles having gained strength was once more enabled to join the family, and continued to receive fresh proofs of the friendship of his young benefactor; and Mr. Herman, having made due observation on his temper and talents, found himself every day more and more inclined to accede to the wishes of Henry, and as soon as he came of a proper age, to try his interest, which was great, in getting him into a situation under government. He had nearly made up his mind on the subject, when one day a large party of gentlemen dined with him by invitation. Among the number was one whose name was Castleton: he had lately become proprietor of an estate situated six miles from Herman Manor;

nor; he was remarkable for an air of thoughtfulness, that appeared by indulgence to have become habitual, and his complexion evidently proved his having been an inhabitant of a warmer climate. Mr. Herman had met him at the house of Mr. Melmouth, and on understanding he was soon to reside near them, had sent the invitation that now brought him to his table.

During the time of dinner he scarcely removed his eyes from Charles Curtis for a moment; and when, on Mrs. Herman's rising to withdraw, Charles and Henry rose to accompany her, his seat seemed to grow uneasy; at last he inquired of the gentleman who sat
next

next him, " If both those fine youths who had just left the room were the sons of Mr. Herman? and on being told only the eldest, he eagerly exclaimed, " Who, sir, then, is the other?" The gentleman, surprised at his earnest manner of speaking, and much embarrassed by the question, as he had heard the story of Charles very imperfectly, referred him to Mr. Herman for intelligence, who replied, " As there are none but friends present, who will not accuse me of a too great parental partiality, I will relate all I know of this youth; and notwithstanding I have it not in my power to claim any affinity to him, he is, and shall ever remain, the adopted sharer of my affection." He then, in

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a circumstantial manner, related the accident that first introduced him to the knowledge of Henry, of whose conduct the company expressed their approbation by the loudest applauses. When he came to the account Charles gave of himself, Mr. Castleton listened, as if fearful even his breath would interrupt him; and when he pursued the thread of his narrative, and repeated, "My name is Charles Curtis," he started from his seat, and loudly exclaimed, "Curtis!" but instantly recovering himself, begged pardon, and desired he would proceed. He continued much agitated during the recital; but when the name of "Bruce" met his ear, he clasped his hands together, started from his seat again, and having
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uttered, "My dear sister, are you, then gone! What an inhuman wretch have I been!" burst into a flood of tears, unmindful of the company who crowded round him, to render that assistance he appeared to stand in need of. In a short time he was collected enough to request he might be indulged with the company of Charles Curtis, who, from every circumstance he had heard, he conjectured to be his nephew: he likewise entreated to be favoured with a sight of the mourning ring, mentioned as the property of the deceased Mrs. Curtis, as though he had few doubts the sight of that would elucidate the matter.

Mr. Herman, who had been a good

deal hurried during the foregoing scene, now retired, to impart what had happened to Charles, and to prepare his young mind for the surprize that awaited him. On his entering the drawing room the change in his countenance alarmed his affectionate wife, and she asked "What had happened?" in a tremulous voice.—"Nothing unpleasant, my love," he returned; "and if you will listen patiently, and promise as much for both those boys, I will make you all partakers of the happy sensations that have at this time possession of my breast." Each promised for themselves; and Mr. Herman, drawing Charles close to him, thus began:

"I believe,

"I believe, my dear Charles, that you have never, since the fortunate hour my beloved son rescued you from the brutal power of young Sylwne, wished yourself released from the patronage I with so much pleasure afforded your helpless frame—Answer me not, I have not yet done—But, notwithstanding we have been equally happy in each other, I should esteem myself the most selfish of human beings, was I not to encourage the evident partiality Mr. Castleton has this day imbibed in your favour, though I own I shall part with you with great reluctance."—"Part with me, sir!" exclaimed the agitated youth: "do not part with me! Make me useful in any manner—I will gladly undertake

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any thing, rather than leave your dear family and my still dearer benefactor!" seizing the hand of Henry, who sat in his chair motionless.—" Alas! what can I have done to offend," continued he, " that I am to be denied the blessing of your company and example—Entreat for me, that my sentence may be reversed!"

" You have done nothing to offend, my dear boy, I am well convinced," interrupted Henry; and then turning to his father, begged he would explain the meaning of the discourse he had just heard. Mr. Herman, after he had desired Charles to be composed, related all that had occurred in the parlour, and leaving him to the care of his wife,

wife, hastened with the ring to Mr. Castleton, who was impatiently expecting him. On the ring was engraved, 'James Bruce, obiit Sept. 11, 1759;' which he had no sooner read, than he declared it had been given by him to his sister at the death of their father.—“ I have now *no doubts*, my dear sir,” said he, addressing Mr. Herman, “ Charles Curtis is my nephew—the child of my dearest sister, who, from my inhumanity, was driven to the lowest ebb of poverty; and had not the goodness of an all-wise Providence ordained you the protector of his helpless youth, might have been now struggling in indigence, even if the precepts he received from his exemplary mother had preserved him from infamy: to you,

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therefore,

therefore, I offer my humble gratitude, for his preservation, and for my being once more, through your means, enabled to look forward for more than I expected, a few years of happiness, enjoyed in the company of that beloved boy. But may I not now be permitted to clasp him in my arms, and acquaint him to whom he owes his origin." Mr. Herman rang the bell, and desired a servant to inform Charles Curtis and his son their company was requested. On their entrance Mr. Castleton rushed forward, and caught Charles to his breast with parental eagerness, who, as soon as he could disengage himself, dropped on his knee, and assured his uncle he should ever be ready, by his attentions, to
evince

evinced the duty he felt for him. Mr. Castleton acknowledged himself much gratified by his behaviour; and turning to Mr. Herman, told him he was ready, whenever he requested it, to relate the circumstances that had rendered him an alien to his sister, and occasioned his nephew to be obliged to his humanity for support and protection.—“ We will, if you please, sir,” replied Mr. Herman, “ adjourn to the drawing room, and take a cup of coffee; after which, if you find yourself equal to the fatigue your spirits (already sufficiently flurried) must necessarily undergo from so painful a recital, Mrs. Herman, as well as myself, shall esteem ourselves obliged to you; for nothing that relates to our

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dear

dear Charles can be uninteresting to us."

Mr. Castleton bowed, and Charles kissed the hand of his benefactor. They then repaired to the drawing room; and after the tea equipage had been removed, Mr. Castleton began as follows.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

"MY father was a West India Merchant, whose commercial connections were extensive; myself and sister were the only children he ever had, as my mother died when we were young.— Amelia was the most gentle of her sex, with a delicate, pleasing person; she was possessed of a most excellent disposition. I felt for her the strongest fraternal affection, and have frequently wondered at the unnatural behaviour of my father, who could not be prevailed

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vailed on by the unwearied assiduity of the lovely girl to hold her in any estimation; he ever showed the most careless indifference towards her, and the sums expended in her education he would frequently say was money thrown away, although his pride would not allow him to restrain her eagerness for learning: of me, on the contrary, he was immoderately fond; nothing I ever asked was refused, and whatever money I requested was given with the greatest cheerfulness, without even a question. My dear sister shared with me what I received, as but for that she must many times have appeared in a humiliating manner. Not to tire you by too long a detail, I shall only inform you, that things continued in this manner

manner till I had attained my two and twentieth, and Amelia her eighteenth year, when our father was one day brought home from Change in a state of insensibility, and, notwithstanding every possible assistance, expired the next day, without his recollection having returned for one minute.

“ To represent our affliction at this melancholy event would be as vain as needless, my sister's affection for her father being unbounded; and had I not regretted him, I must have been the most ungrateful of all created beings. When the will was opened, it appeared he had, a few legacies and five hundred pounds to Amelia only excepted, left me the whole of his property,

perty, which consisted of a very large sum in the public funds, besides a considerable estate in Jamaica. The injustice I could not but think was done my sister, by this unequal distribution, determined me in an idea I had long entertained, that it should be my care to make up to her any deficiency of fortune, which my father's partiality to me gave every reason to expect would one day leave it in my power to do. Not a murmur dropt from the dear girl when she heard of the trifle her father had bequeathed her; and she received my intimation of increasing her fortune, and intreaties that she would consider my house as hers also, with the warmest expressions of gratitude. As I was certain of retaining my father's

ther's correspondents, I still continued the business, my sister presiding as mistress of the house.

“ Among the clerks employed in the counting house, was a young man, whose name was Charles Curtis; he had been left an orphan when very young, and as my father was not deficient in humanity, and came to the knowledge of his destitute situation by the means of a friend, he took him, and bestowed on him such an education as enabled him at sixteen to be taken into the counting house: as his disposition was good, and his integrity firm, my father reposed great confidence in him, and had left him one hundred pounds in his will.—I felt for him the most cordial

dial friendship : he was the constant companion of myself and Amelia ; and being so extremely fond of my sister, I never paid any attention to the assiduity of Charles, nor imagined he thought of her, but as the daughter of his late benefactor.

“ Having some weighty transactions in St. Domingo in an unpleasant state, my personal interference became necessary, and I departed for that island, leaving affairs at home in the hands of Curtis. I was absent twelve months ; when, having settled all to my satisfaction, I returned, and found every thing at home in exact order. How could I ever forget such just and punctual dealings ? My sister rejoiced greatly at
my

my return; yet I thought I observed a hidden grief: her countenance would frequently be overcast, and she had lost that innocent sprightliness that rendered her so fascinating. I had several times requested to be informed of the reason, but had always been put by with evasive answers; when, having importuned her one day more than usual, she owned she was fearful of my anger, as dreading a refusal, should my consent be asked—she had ventured to the altar with the man of her heart. “He must then, surely, be undeserving your regard, Amelia,” I replied, concealing my inward perturbation, “or you would not be fearful of my ready compliance to render you happy. But who is the fortunate purchaser of your valuable

valuable heart?"—"Will not my dear brother," she answered, "feel the bonds of friendship strengthened by the ties of affinity."—"Is it, then, the villain Curtis," I replied, "who, forgetful of the benefits heaped upon him, has dared to steal the affection of my sister, and drawn her into a marriage injurious to her, and disgraceful to his benefactor?"

"The tears and sighs of my hitherto almost adored sister had no power over my rage; in vain she pleaded for her beloved Charles—I sent for him, and discharged him from his employ, and on my sister's refusing to comply with my request, (that she should hold no converse with her husband), though that refusal

refusal was delivered in the mildest manner, I insisted she should leave my house, and retiring to my library, inclosed bills to the amount of five hundred and fifty pounds, which, in a memorandum that I likewise inclosed, I informed her was the amount of the fortune, with interest, that was left her by her father; nor could her utmost entreaties prevail on me to see her again. She left the house that night, and every letter or message from her, and my so late regarded friend, were treated with the utmost contempt; nay, I carried my resentment so far, that, on a merchant's applying to me for a character of him, I warned him from taking a villain into his service, when even justice should have led me to
speak

peak of his deservings as a man, however private pique might have stimulated me to hold him at a distance from my affections as a brother.

“ My sister had not left me more than three months, when some affairs relative to my estate called for my personal presence in Jamaica ; being disgusted with trade since the death of my father, I discharged my clerks, and put my affairs in train for adjustment, as I had come to the resolution of living for the future independent.

“ I failed for our western possessions with a mind ill at ease ; Amelia pressed heavy on my heart ; but I could not bring myself to the disposition of receiving

ceiving Curtis as her husband, and I well knew any fresh attempt I could make to draw her from the man she had attended to the altar, and vowed solemnly to obey, would prove abortive; yet every league that conveyed me farther from the land of my nativity, and from that dear sister, whom, strange as it might appear, I still loved beyond every earthly blessing, added fresh pangs to my already uneasy mind.

“ After a favourable passage, I arrived safely at Jamaica, and took a house in Kingston, my estate lying an easy ride distant from that town: for some time the gloom on my spirits prevented my associating with the planters and gentlemen, who sought my company,

pany, and from whom I had received pressing invitations, but at length I suffered myself to be prevailed on; and found great relief from their converse.

“ Though I always respected the females, I had never met any one with whom I could have wished to pass my days, till, at the house of a gentleman, with whose family I had become very intimate, I met a young lady, his ward, who appeared to me to possess every qualification likely to form the good wife, and every accomplishment to render her an entertaining companion. Her fortune I had never heard, for I had never inquired—I was satisfied with what I enjoyed, and judged it fully sufficient. The more I saw of this

this lady the more my partiality increased; and as she received the attentions I paid her apparently with more pleasure than from any other, I ventured to solicit her guardian for permission to address her: he only smiled, and referred me for an answer to Julia Castleton, such being her name. My propositions were favourably received; and on relating the success I had met with to my friend, he astonished me by saying her fortune was immense; and when he saw the confusion I appeared in at the intelligence, informed me he suspected, that, had he related this circumstance at the time I solicited his consent, it might have thrown a bar in the way of two people, whose happiness he was most anxious to promote,

mote, as he was no stranger, he added, to my peculiar way of thinking. He then proceeded to inform me, that Miss Castleton was the orphan child of two of his dearest friends; that the property she enjoyed from her parents was small; but that her grandfather had left to her the whole of his possessions, with this only proviso—that the man of her choice should, previous to receiving her hand, take the name of Castleton, which he imagined I could state no objection to, there being none more honourable in the island. I answered, “That though I should much rather transmit my family name to posterity, yet Julia was too dear to me to make it a matter of controversy.” Suffice it to say, in

nine months after my arrival I was attended to church by my friend, and received from him the hand of my amiable Julia, one of the best and most worthy of her sex. The conditions of her grandfather's will had been duly observed, and I took the name I now bear, which, doubtless, rendered abortive every inquiry my dear sister made after me, as she knew nothing of those events.

“ In twelve months my wife presented me with a son, which added greatly to my happiness, notwithstanding I had supposed it incapable of addition: one only pang remained, and that was the fate of my sister. As I had related the whole to Julia, she advised I should

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send to England, and endeavour to heal the breach that had so long, from a mistaken resentment on my side, subsisted. I did so, but could never obtain any certain intelligence: I heard, indeed, that my sister had had a son; but whether he, his father, or mother still existed, was a matter of doubt.

“ My wife next proposed that we should, as soon as convenient, go ourselves to England, and suggested the idea, to sooth my mind, that we should be more successful; but her situation was such as prevented our taking the voyage for some months. Alas! my Julia was a blessing I was shortly to be deprived of; for, after the birth of a daughter at the expected time, and
when

when I was in the very act of returning my thanksgiving to the Almighty for her preservation, I had intelligence brought me in my closet, that my dearest partner lay at the point of death, and, without I was very quick, I should lose even the poor consolation of seeing her breathe again. I hastened to her chamber, and flung myself on my knees by the bedside; but though she was thoroughly sensible, the power of articulation was denied her, and she could only press my hand feebly between both hers, and by the movement of her lips appeared to be praying. I acquired fortitude enough at that time to restrain the tide of grief that seemed ready to overwhelm me; but the last sigh had scarce escaped her lips, when

its violence bore down every opposition, and I was conveyed to my chamber.

“ A violent fit of illness followed; nor did I recover the full power of recollection till my Julia had been three months conveyed to the peaceful tomb of her ancestors; the same friend who had officiated at the altar to make me happy, taking on himself, during my state of insensibility, the mournful task of seeing the funeral rites performed: he loved her as a daughter, and sincerely lamented her death.

“ On the restoration of my faculties, I eagerly inquired for my children: George was brought me, and I found
a pleasing

a pleasing, though mournful consolation, in tracing in his infant face a likeness to his beloved mother; the young Julia, for such they informed me she had been named, was given to the care of a nurse well qualified to afford her the proper nourishment.—It was a long time before I regained my strength: the loss of my wife had brought my sister more forcibly to my recollection, and I continually accused myself of having, by my own inhumanity, driven an affectionate friend from my councils—and, except my children, I felt as alone in the world, without one endearing connection.—The hand of fate had not yet withdrawn its scourge; for scarcely had I lamented my Julia six months, when

my George, my beloved son, was seized with the small pox, and torn from my parental arms by the grim tyrant. Once again I sunk beneath the stroke, and continued for some months in so doubtful a way, that the medical professors knew not how to deliver a positive opinion; but having naturally a strong constitution, my health slowly returned, though my spirits had received so severe a wound, that for five years I continued in a melancholy state little short of insanity. The friend I have so often mentioned before transacted my affairs, it being impossible to draw my attention to any thing; even the little prattle of my daughter lost its effect. At the end of that period it pleased the all-wise disposer

poser of events to permit me to rouse from this dreadful lethargy of sorrow, and I soon after came to the resolution of leaving a spot where I had known both happiness and grief in a superlative degree, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. I left the island with my little Julia, and on my return took the earliest opportunity of personally seeking my sister. I visited the house in which she had resided at the time her son was born; but as she left it soon after that event, and went into the city to live, (her husband having got some employ in a commercial house) the people could inform me no farther. I traced out the house where Curtis had been engaged, and understood he had remained there, with an

unblemished character, till a putrid fever attacked him, and he was obliged to relinquish his clerkship: he had, they said, retired with his wife and child into the country, as they learnt from the people in whose house they lodged, (when they sent to inquire) the wife being but just recovered from a similar illness. I used every means I could devise to gain further information, even advertising in the public papers, but never could procure the least intimation respecting them. I have been in England three years, and, except the time of the school vacations, which brings home my little Julia, now turned of eight years old, whose innocent endearments beguile the tedious hours, I can safely say, I have

have never experienced so truly happy a period, as since I have known your hospitable family; for the recovery of my dear nephew has exhilarated my almost dormant feelings; and I hope the joint interest of my dear girl, and this deserving boy, will now occupy every future moment, as I mean he shall share both my affection and fortune equally with that beloved daughter.—A poor compensation for the injury done, by my unjust resentment, to his gentle mother's feelings, and his father's irreproachable conduct."

CHAP. IX.

MR. Castleton having ended received the thanks of the company, and Charles going to his uncle, desired he would endeavour to drop disagreeable recollection, as it should be his study, by every dutiful, attentive exertion, to render his future hours more easy; and he hoped he should acquit himself to his satisfaction.—“That I will be answerable you will, my dear boy,” answered Mr. Herman; “for never was there a more grateful heart: and I dare

dare affirm every one of the gentlemen now present will acknowledge gratitude a virtue deserving of the highest commendation; it never yet was an inmate of a bad heart; and I am not at all fearful I shall ever have reason to condemn myself for being too sanguine in your favour."

The consanguinity of Mr. Castleton to Charles Curtis drew him near to the affection of the worthy Hermans: he did not appear to them as a stranger, but as a long lost friend. Henry particularly attached himself to him: the contrition he expressed for suffering an ill-founded resentment to act with such arbitrary sway over his fraternal and friendly feelings, in his opinion, did

away the offence, and his open, generous heart, exulted in the good fortune of his dear Charles, more than it would have done from any event in which himself solely had been concerned. Robert Sylwne, on the contrary, as soon as he was informed of the discovery that had taken place at Herman Manor, felt the full power of envy take possession of every sense. Envy, that baneful guest, who never suffers her votaries to enjoy peace of mind, should you have the least reason to suspect her approach, my young readers, shut every avenue to your heart and mind against her entrance; for if, from negligence, she once gains admittance, greatly will you have reason to lament you ever was for a moment off your guard.

Robert

Robert knew that Charles Curtis was now placed beyond his utmost malice; and from the traits that have already been given of his disposition, it will not be any wonder that he should envy him, on being acknowledged nephew by a man of Mr. Cassleton's wealth: a seat being purchased too in that neighbourhood, added to his chagrin, as, judging from his own character, he imagined Charles Curtis would take every opportunity to lower and mortify him; but he was a stranger to the good heart and amiable temper of that youth: retaliation for injuries received never entered his mind—the only pleasing reflection he felt from his elevation, was, first, that he should be enabled to cheer the heart of drooping poverty,

poverty, perhaps be the instrument of rescuing from want and misery some deserving wanderer like himself, when taken into the protection of Mr. Herman; secondly, he could be as a son to his uncle, and perhaps be the principal means of smoothing the declining pillow of his age. Henry Herman sincerely rejoiced, that the good fortune of his young friend would not be the means of removing him any great distance from Herman Manor, it being the intention of Mr. Castleton (which he now declared) to reside on the estate he had recently purchased, as soon as the Mansion house of the late proprietor, which was gone greatly to decay, could be made tenable for his reception, till which he gladly accepted Mr. Herman's invitation

invitation of remaining his visitor, as his nephew became too dear to him for even the absence of a few weeks to be dispensed with.

During the interval that remained between the present time and Mr. Castleton's taking possession of his new habitation, Mr. Sylwne was thrown from his horse while in pursuit of the hounds, and received so violent a contusion of the brain, that, after languishing about eight days, and undergoing divers surgical operations, he died, leaving his son Robert an orphan. Every one was surprised, that, after the most minute search, no will could be found, consequently this bad disposed youth could meet with no check from

from guardians, but was, at the early age of sixteen, left to follow the wild career of his own headstrong passions. The apparent unconcern that appeared in all his actions, at the loss of his affectionate doating father, would of itself have stamped his character, had he not long before given a sufficient insight into his natural disposition; for scarce was this good parent conveyed to his grave before he set out for London, accompanied by a young man of a very libertine turn, that had, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mr. Sylwne, long been his favorite companion; and, by the accounts that were brought into the country, this pair indulged themselves in every excess that the metropolis afforded them.

them, there being numbers ready to administer to the wants of young men, who are known to be heirs to large fortunes, and whose rage for dissipation make them greedily catch at the means of being supplied, though obliged for that supply to pay an exorbitant interest.

Henry Herman and his friend Charles, on the contrary, continued the admiration of the surrounding country. It would be endless to recount the many meritorious actions done by those worthy youths, that were constantly made the theme of every company; scarce could there be discerned the cast of care on any countenance where their bounty could reach

reach. Mr. Castleton was never so happy as when he was attended by his nephew, and his almost as dear Henry Herman. His little Julia had been to see him, and was much delighted by her new cousin. She was a most amiable child, and greatly interested Henry, by the gentleness of her temper. Sophia Melmouth, frequently mentioned in the former part of this work, was introduced to Julia, and notwithstanding the difference of their age, the young ladies became much attached to each other, probably from a similarity of disposition. Mr. Castleton now arranged it, that his daughter should remain at school no more than one twelvemonth longer, but that the finishing of her education should
be

be at home, as he was much delighted with the good qualities and high accomplishments of Miss Melmouth.— How gratifying must it be to a well disposed mind to meet with marks of approbation from the really worthy— Can any application be irksome that leads to so desirable an end? Make therefore good use, my young readers, of the means allowed you for improvement: time once lost can never be redeemed; and the greatest return you can make to your parents, relations, or guardians, for their care in your education, is by strict attention to the different branches you are taught, by that convincing them you are sensible of their kindness.

CHAP. X.

CHARLES and his uncle were one day discoursing on former transactions, when the subject happened to turn on the warm attachment old Peggy had evinced for his mother.—Mr. Castleton regretted that she was removed by fate from receiving any token of his gratitude, when Charles replied:—"I have very often wished, my dear sir, it had been possible I could have been informed how long the worthy creature suffered from the illness she laboured under when I last
saw

saw her, and have frequently felt uneasy sensations, in the idea that she did not live to reach the parish they were conveying her to, which was in Wiltshire, near the city of Salisbury; in such case I fear little attention was payed to her remains, though worthy of the greatest. I have sometimes," he continued, "been tempted to intrude on your indulgence for permission to go to the parish she belonged to, in order to make inquiries, but have checked my inclination, lest you should suppose me romantic."—"Far from it, my dear boy," returned Mr. Castleton; "and if you continue still to have such a wish you shall be gratified: I will be your companion, and perhaps we may prevail on Mr. Herman

man to spare his son for a few days; the excursion will be both healthy and pleasant, independent of the satisfaction you will receive from the gratification of your praise-worthy curiosity: speak—do you continue anxious to know the particulars of poor Peggy's death?"—"Indeed, sir, I do," answered Charles; "and, believe me, I am grateful for your kindness in so willingly consenting to accompany me." Mr. Castleton departed immediately for Herman Manor, to procure the consent of Mr. Herman, that his son might accompany them, if the excursion received his approbation: he met the young gentleman before he reached the house, and informed him of the discourse that had taken place, and

and Henry was delighted with the idea, he being almost as eager as his friend Charles to learn the fate of Peggy, whose faithful attachment had ever met his warmest praises. Mr. Herman readily allowed his son to accompany Mr. Castleton and his nephew, though he did not suppose they would obtain any information. The next morning they set out, viewing every thing worth seeing in the towns through which they passed.

Having arrived at the place, they immediately called on the churchwardens, and acquainted them, they wished to be informed concerning the death of an elderly woman, who three years before had been passed to that
parish

parish, to which she belonged. The church-wardens were very willing the books should be searched, and for that purpose inquired her name, which, on being told was Margaret Bamford, observed, they were sure the name was familiar to their recollection, which they wondered at, as they had not been in the office they held above half that time; but if the gentlemen would trouble themselves to call in two hours, they should have every information in their power to afford them.

When they left the officers of the parish, Charles proposed they should go to the workhouse; for, if poor Peggy had reached it alive, some of the inhabitants might remember the circumstance,

stance, and be enabled to give them better information than they could receive from any other person. This proposition was agreed to, and they went to the poor house, where the air of neatness that prevailed gave them great pleasure: they stopped to make inquiries of a man whose looks pleased them, without regarding the bystanders. After relating the circumstance, and waiting an answer, the man observed, they had not informed him what name the woman bore—Charles answered, “Margaret or Peggy Bamford.” An exclamation, “It is, it must be, my dear young master!” occasioned them to turn, when a clean old woman instantly caught Charles in her arms, crying, “She could not be

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mistaken, as the likeness he bore to her regretted mistress convinced her." The possibility of the old woman's having survived the illness she laboured under when she left Charles, had never crossed his recollection; he therefore, for a few seconds, stood in as much amazement as if something supernatural had appeared before him, but soon recovered his surprize sufficiently to assure Peggy that he felt the most unfeigned pleasure in once more being permitted to converse with her. Though the old woman was too prudent to ask any questions, Charles saw she looked with astonishment at his altered appearance, he therefore drew them a little aside, and presented her to his uncle, who received her very kindly, and told her, since

since they had been so fortunate as to meet with her when they least expected it, he had a proposition to make, which, he flattered himself, would equally please her, and gratify his nephew :—" You shall, for the future," said Mr. Castleton, " reside under the same roof with the boy, for whom your solicitude has shewn itself even parental, and receive from his grateful hand a recompence for all your attentions bestowed in the hour of distress on his beloved mother ; acquaint me if either have any objection." Peggy, quite overcome with joy, could only lift up her eyes toward that power, who sees, and, in his own good time, rewards the actions of those that please him, while Charles, taking his hand,

and bowing on it, said—"Teach me, sir, how, I shall thank you for all your goodness—you have anticipated the request I was about to make; and though this worthy creature is, from emotion, at present denied the ability of thanking you properly, I can plainly observe how rejoiced she is at your offer." Peggy being now recovered, bestowed many blessings on the beneficent gentleman, whose goodness would permit her aged eyes to be daily feasted with the sight of her young master, the behaviour of whom, she said, "was the exact counterpart of his angel mother's."

Having for the present taken leave of Peggy, they repaired to the inn, to arrange

arrange matters for their departure ; as she was apparently hale and hearty, they judged she would be capable of fulfilling the journey without any attendant, they therefore secured a place in the stage coach, which was to depart the next morning, and would carry her within four miles of Mr. Castle-ton's house, from whence he intended to send a carriage to fetch her: the coachman was charged to be attentive, for which service he was rewarded before-hand.

Charles was deputed to inform Peggy she must leave the workhouse that evening, and repair to the inn, in order to pursue her journey on the morrow ; and having supplied her

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with

with money for her expences, he returned to his uncle and Henry; and in less than an hour they proceeded on their road back to Fairfield, the seat of Mr. Castleton. Charles was silent; his active imagination retraced former scenes, and his heart swelled with gratitude to the Creator of the Universe, for his manifold favours heaped upon him, so lately the child of affliction; and he secretly resolved, never, by sinful and vicious habits, to forfeit the protection of his heavenly Father, but to pursue such paths as should, as far as he could judge, secure to himself his approbation.— The resolve was worthy a good mind; and I would earnestly recommend such a resolution to all my young readers,

readers, well knowing that the approbation of their own conscience, were they to receive no other recompence, would be a sufficient reward.

The travellers reached home by noon the next day; and Henry hastened to Herman Manor, to pay his affectionate respects to his parents.— On his recounting the events of their journey, both Mr. and Mrs. Herman rejoiced with him, that the worthy Peggy was likely to meet, even in this world, a recompence for performing her duty, and gave those praises to Mr. Castleton his actions so well merited. The old woman arrived safe at Fairfield, and was received

with pleasure: she was so established in the family, that she was, and had every reason to be satisfied with her situation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

SOME years elapsed, when every virtue that had appeared in early youth, both in Henry Herman and Charles Curtis, gained strength, and shone with peculiar brilliancy. Mr. Herman has been mentioned as the most affectionate of parents; nor could envy herself find a fault in the conduct of Mr. Castleton: every benevolent arrangement of his nephew's was fulfilled with the most scrupulous exactness, and with the greatest pleasure, though he

had ever expressed an aversion to render young people too early independent, observing, that where there was one who had a mind strong enough to conduct himself properly under such circumstances, half a dozen would, by the same means, become votaries to dissipation.

Charles was extremely pleased with his uncle's sentiments on this subject; he wished to receive every benefit at his hands: and Mr. Castleton, from the uniformity of his behaviour, and the attachment that seemed to have taken place between him and Julia, looked forward to the time, when, if consonant to their inclinations, of which he had not much doubt, he should

should see the most attentive of nephews converted to one of the most dutiful of sons. Sophia Melmouth and Julia Castleton were become inseparable; and Julia had improved surprisingly from the friendship of the former, between whom and Henry Herman the parents of both had viewed with great satisfaction a growing partiality, that was now, by the joint consent of both families, likely to terminate in a happy union, their dispositions being so congenial, as promised every thing their admiring friends could expect.

Robert Sylwne, during this time, had been lavishing the large fortune his father left in the most reprehensible follies; and far from ever being the means

of reanimating one face overclouded with sorrow with the cheerful smile of content, he seemed sent forth on the earth merely as a scourge: no ties were strong enough to bind him; and whether he conveyed misery to parents, husbands, or sons, was equally indifferent to him, so he was gratified.—Gaming was his favorite diversion; and fatal it at last proved; for he, by one unfortunate cast of the die, lost every thing he had left of his former prosperity, and became the most forlorn wretch alive. Previous to this he had sacrificed largely to Bacchus, so as to undermine his constitution, and reduce his once athletic form to a mere skeleton; and not knowing where to turn in his extremity, having no friend to
apply

apply to, and being almost starved, his thoughts turned on those whom, in the days of his prosperity, he had taken so much delight to injure ; and he had frequently heard, while he was following his vicious career, that they still continued "*The joy and pride of all the country round.*" Though it then passed unheeded, he determined to apply to them for that assistance denied him now by those who had been his former companions.

Robert had had time to reflect, and bitterly repented of the follies that had reduced him to his present abject state, though 'tis probable, had he again enjoyed affluence, he would still have pursued the destructive amusements
that

that had so long fascinated him ; but adversity had shewn him, in its proper light, the ill effects attending a life of vicious pursuit ; and with an intention to devote his time for the future to more laudable purposes, if he could attain the protection of either Henry Herman or Charles Curtis, to whom he instantly resolved to apply, he set out on foot for his habitation, his finances not admitting of any other mode of travelling. When he arrived near the seat of Mr. Herman, he began to consider in what manner he should make known the purport of his visit, and where he should remain, for his pride forbid his entering into any house of public entertainment with so different an appearance to what he had been

been accustomed to, though, could he have been sensible of his own altered form and features, he needed not to have feared being known, as it was impossible, without a strict investigation, for those that had seen him six years before to have imagined it the same person.

At length he recollected the nurse of Henry, whose cottage it has been observed stood close to the park gate; thither he bent his steps, and finding no one at home but the good woman, requested she would have the kindness to go to the manor, and deliver a message for him to the younger Mr. Herman, and permit him to wait her return.—Nurse, who had not the least recollection

tion of him, assented very willingly, and hurried to convey the message she had received. Charles Curtis was with his friend Henry, when the good woman entered, and told him, there was a gentleman at her cottage who appeared very ill, and requested he would do him the favour to come and speak to him. She was interrogated, but declared her ignorance of who it could be; and Henry, having dispatched her to inform the gentleman he would attend him, requested Charles to accompany him, which was readily complied with, and they set out.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

ON their arrival at the cottage Robert rose from his seat: his heart felt a pang when he saw Henry's companion, but he determined to get the better of all false shame, which his desperate situation encouraged him to do.— Henry observing the languid countenance of the stranger, as he appeared to him, addressed him, saying, "This good woman, sir, informed me you wished to speak with me; in what can I be of service to you? Command me freely."

freely.”—“ You do not know me, then, Mr. Herman,” replied Robert ; “ and I shall be obliged to announce a name, that will, I fear, change all your compassion to indignation : but I have justly deserved every mortification. There was a time when the name of Sylwne was respected, but my follies and vices have sunk it into disgrace.”—“ Is it possible !” interrupted Henry ; “ can you really be Robert Sylwne ? Alas ! how changed :” but recollecting himself, he said, “ I am extremely sorry, sir, to see you look so ill, and hope your native air may restore your health ; and, as I have already said, if I can be of the least service to you, inform me.”—“ Indeed, Mr. Herman,” answered Robert,

bert, " I know not how to tell you what was my intention in sending for you ; the insults I ever treated you, and this young gentleman with," turning to Charles, " could leave me little reason to expect my request would be complied with, had I common characters to deal with ; but, knowing the generosity of your nature, I flatter myself a ruined, but repentant profligate, may expect that assistance at your hands the more rigid would deny : in fact, from an infatuation I too late repent of, I am left without the smallest means of support, and in a state of health very unequal to any exertion, and my only hope rests on your bounty ; however, little reason there is to imagine I shall receive it." He
had

had been much agitated during the delivery of the above speech, and now appeared quite spent. The consternation of Henry and Charles, whilst Robert was speaking, may better be imagined than described; but Henry soon collected himself sufficiently to reply as follows:—"I am extremely sorry, Mr. Sylwne, that the situation of your affairs renders an application to me and my friend necessary, on your own account; otherwise, I am happy in an opportunity of being enabled to render you service. The contrition you express for your errors is half amendment; and I dare answer for Mr. Curtis, he harbours no resentment for any former transaction." "You do me more than justice," answered

swered Charles ; “ I am too happy myself not to feel concern for those whose fate has not been equally propitious : and be assured, sir,” continued he, turning to Robert, “ I shall be much gratified, jointly with my friend, in lightening your load of affliction, as soon as a proper plan can be formed for that purpose.”

Robert thanked them, and expressed his regret at his own folly in such pointed terms, and seemed to be so thoroughly repentant, that both the young men pitied him sincerely.— Henry told Robert he must consult with his father on the best way of assisting him ; in the mean time, if he could put up with the accommodations
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of the cottage, nurse, he was certain, would do every thing in her power to serve him. Robert's acknowledgments were great for his kindness; and he assured him the cottage was a palace, in comparison to the habitation he had occupied for some time past.

They now left him, and returned home, to acquaint Mr. Herman of the strange visit they had been to pay; and Henry not only entreated he might be suffered to assist him, but that his father would advise him in what manner to place him, as his health forbid any thing but quiet; Charles at the same time requesting, as soon as his uncle should be informed of the occurrence, he might be permitted to share

share the expence. Thus did those two worthy young men act toward a fallen enemy, who had ever pursued them with rancour: their generous minds only remembered he was in distress—that their helping hands were necessary to his comfort; and with the glow of true benevolence in their hearts, their anxiety was as great for his service as though he had been their dearest friend.

When Mr. Castleton was informed of the wishes of his nephew, to be joint supporter of the distressed Robert Sylwne, he caught him to his breast, and declared every day brought to his view some new virtue in his darling boy; and after he had given him

him free permission to use his purse on the occasion, he congratulated Mr. Herman, who was present, on such a son: "For had not my Charles had such an example to copy from," said he, "half his virtues would have lain dormant."

Robert's health being so bad, and nurse Norris having a very comfortable room, with which he could be accommodated, it was judged most proper he should, if agreeable to himself, continue there, at least for the present, as he would find great benefit from the attention of so careful a woman. When consulted on the subject, his thanks for their goodness became oppressive, and after agreeing with nurse what stipend she

He was to receive for his board, and her own attendance, and leaving with himself money to provide him necessaries, which he much wanted, they left the cottage, happy in the possession of an approving conscience.

A short time after this Henry and Charles were united to Miss Melmouth and Julia Cassleton; Mr. Melmouth having lost his wife, Henry and Sophia took up their residence with him; Charles Curtis remained with his uncle, who now, from his marriage with his daughter, claimed a yet nearer interest in him. Thus happy in each other lived this circle of friends, their ready hand ever exerted to succour the unfortunate, and chase the tear of sorrow

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from

from the human countenance: it was with grief they saw little amendment in Robert Sylwyne's health; the destructive course he had pursued brought on him a premature old age, but every alleviation in the power of friends to bestow, they gladly administered, and determined he should enjoy their protection as long as the Almighty should think proper to prolong his sufferings.

Forgiveness of injuries is, surely, the greatest test of virtue; it exalts the injured almost beyond human nature; and the consolation derived from such a source must be a pleasure of so refined a nature, as to carry with it its own reward.

FINIS.



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